

South Dakota Preliminary Draft Resource Management Plan

Vision and Management Goals

The overall vision of the SDFO in preparing this Draft RMP/EIS is to manage BLM-administered public lands in the planning area in a manner that provides for multiple uses while sustaining a healthy and productive environment for present and future generations. The vision is supported by the guiding principle that would enhance the quality of life for all citizens through the balanced stewardship of America's public lands and resources. A number of management goals and objectives that guided alternative development for this RMP were developed from information collected from public scoping efforts, existing laws and regulations, cooperative efforts, and from the inter-disciplinary planning team.

The SDFO has considered the public's needs and stakeholder values in the management of resources and resource uses proposed in this management plan.

GOALS

Air Quality

- BLM authorizations and management activities protect the local quality of life and sustain economic benefits by complying with tribal, local, county, state, and federal air quality regulations, requirements, and implementation plans.
- Meet federal and state air quality standards.

Climate Change

- Evaluate the observed and anticipated long-term dynamic of climate change and minimize the impact of greenhouse gases from projects to the degree practicable and reasonably foreseeable.
- Provide for diverse, healthy ecosystems that are resilient to stresses such as climate change. Provide for flexible, adaptable management that allows for timely responses to changing climatic conditions.
- Maintain or improve the ability of BLM lands to reduce (sequester) atmospheric greenhouse gases.

Soil Resources

- Manage uses to minimize soil erosion, sedimentation to water sources, and compaction; and maintain surface soil water infiltration based on site-specific conditions.
- Maintain or improve soil health and productivity, while supporting multiple-use management.
- Soils are stable and provide for capture, storage, and release of water appropriate to soil type, climate, and land form.
- Soils are productive and support vegetation that provides forage, wildlife habitat, watershed protection, and esthetic characteristic based on soil type.
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Water Resources

- Maintain or improve the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of water resources to protect designated beneficial uses and achieve water quality standards.
- Improve watershed function to minimize erosion and accelerated runoff to streams.
- Maintain or enhance water quality for municipal, industrial, agricultural, recreational, and residential purposes.
- Maintain existing, or acquire new, water rights on BLM lands to ensure water availability for multiple-use management, while adhering to the State of South Dakota water right laws and regulations.
- Protect ground water quantity and quality.
- Meet water quality standards without adversely affecting prior existing water rights and uses, and protect beneficial uses of water.

Vegetation

- Manage BLM-administered public lands to provide plant communities that support the integrity of the ecological processes (water, energy, and nutrient cycles) and to provide forage, watershed protection, and a variety of wildlife habitat.
- Public lands meet the Dakotas Standards for Rangeland Health (BLM 1997a).
- A variety of habitat is present with a diverse assemblage of native plant communities indicative of the Northern Great Plains. Native plants dominate the planning area and are resistant to invasive plants, noxious weeds, and invasive pests.
- The abundance of woody vegetation is maintained or improved on those riparian sites that have the potential to support woody vegetation.
- Stands of oak, aspen, box elder, ash, and other hardwoods are maintained and a variety of age classes are present.

Invasive Species

Invasive plant species including noxious weeds:

- Reducing existing acres infested by invasive plants and noxious weeds through Integrated Pest Management (IPM) treatment methods including restoration and elimination of new infestations through early detection and rapid response.
- New infestations are not common and existing infestations are declining across the landscape.
- Invasive plants and noxious weeds are not leading to a decrease in acres that are meeting Standards for Rangeland Health.

Invasive terrestrial animals and insect species:

- Manage invasive terrestrial animal and insect species, and state and locally declared pests. Reduce acres and/or density of infestations by invasive species through prevention, early detection and rapid response, and provide education opportunities for public land users.
- Infestations are not common across the landscape.

Invasive Aquatic Species:

- Keep the aquatic environment free from invasive aquatic species. Prevent the introduction of invasive species into the aquatic environment through education of public land users on prevention, early detection, rapid response, control, management and restoration.
- All lentic (lakeshore/wetland) and lotic (river/stream) areas remain free from invasive aquatic species.

Wildlife Species

- Ensure that native wildlife species are provided with habitat of sufficient quality and quantity to enhance biological diversity and sustain their economic, social, and ecological values.
- Provide habitat and forage to support wildlife with consideration of South Dakota Wildlife Action Plan game management goals and the Northern Great Plains Joint Venture Program.
- Improve the resilience of wildlife habitats to protect wildlife communities from stressors and catastrophic events such as wildfire and climate change.
- A full spectrum of biological community habitats and their ecological processes are present.
- Populations of native plants and animals are well distributed across the landscape.
- Provide suitable habitat condition to allow for movement between large blocks of habitat.
- Maintain or improve specialized habitats on a local and landscape scale.

Special Status Species

- Ensure the long term and self-sustaining persistence of special status species in SD.
- Protect/maintain populations of special status species by minimizing direct mortality and impacts to habitat.
- Provide suitable habitat condition to allow for movement between large blocks of habitat and seasonal and specialized habitats on a local and landscape scale.
- Maintain or improve specialized habitats on a local and landscape scale.
- Maintain and/or increase sage-grouse abundance and distribution by conserving, enhancing or restoring the sagebrush ecosystem upon which populations depend in cooperation with other conservation partners.
- Within sage-grouse General Habitat Areas (GHAs), BLM will maintain habitat for viable sage-grouse populations.
- Manage for the biological integrity and habitat suitability to facilitate the conservation, recovery, and maintenance of populations of fish and wildlife to avoid contributing to the listing of or jeopardizing the continued existence or recovery of special status species and their habitats.
- Maintain or enhance areas of ecological importance for special status wildlife species.
- Conserve and recover special status wildlife species by determining and implementing conservation strategies including restoration opportunities, use restrictions, and management actions.
- Manage specific environmental hazards, risks, and impacts in a manner compatible with special status wildlife species health.
- Identify habitat thresholds necessary to sustain well-distributed healthy populations of special status wildlife species to avoid future listings under the Endangered Species Act.

- Develop and implement the BMPs, activity plans, or use other mechanisms to protect high priority special status wildlife species.
- Manage special status fish and wildlife species in consideration of the working landscape.

Fisheries and Aquatic Communities

- Ensure that aquatic habitat is of suitable quality to support a diversity of plant and animal communities.
- Promote public awareness, appreciation, and fisheries conservation, management, and ecology.

Cultural Resources

- Identify, preserve, and protect significant cultural resources and ensure that they are available for appropriate uses by present and future generations.
- Seek to reduce imminent threats and resolve potential conflicts to cultural resources from natural or human-caused deterioration or from other resource uses.

Paleontological Resources

- Preserve and enhance paleontological resources on BLM-administered public land.
- Provide opportunities for scientific and recreational uses of paleontological resources within the planning area.
- Significant paleontological resources will be identified and preserved for their scientific values.
- Educational and recreational opportunities will be enhanced for the enjoyment of the public.

Visual Resources

- Public lands provide natural appearing landscapes for recreational opportunities.

Wildland Fire Ecology and Management

- Manage wildland fire and fuels for the protection of public health, safety, property, and resource values, emphasizing firefighter and public safety as the single overriding priority.
- Manage hazardous fuels in areas of urban and industrial interface areas to reduce potential loss due to catastrophic wildfire.
- Maintain and/or improve desired mix of seral stages within vegetation communities, including forest and woodlands, grasslands, shrub lands, and riparian/wetlands.
- Manage vegetation communities through cooperative efforts by restoring and maintaining natural fire regimes and fire frequency, where appropriate.
- Maintain and promote partnerships with the public and interagency cooperators to develop and strengthen coordination of all fire management activities across jurisdictional boundaries.
- Utilize integrated management techniques unless otherwise restricted (defined as prescribed fire, mechanical, chemical, or biological, followed by desired seeding) to reduce fuels and to protect high priority areas or resource values.
- Burned areas pose minimal threat to public safety, property, cultural resources, and/or ecological function.

- Continued ecological improvements in the conifer, grassland, shrubland, and riparian strata. This is reflected in moving Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) 3 to 2, Class 2 to 1, and maintaining Class 1; with emphasis in wildland urban interface (WUI) areas.

Forest and Woodland Products

- Manage public forest and woodlands to provide plant communities that support the integrity of the ecological processes (water cycle, energy cycle, and nutrient cycle) and improve or maintain wildlife habitat considering economically efficient methods.
- Forests and woodlands support diverse vegetative communities as indicated by wildlife habitat goals.
- Forests and woodlands would be managed for ecological resiliency, as indicated by fuels and fire management goals.
- Forest and woodland treatments may result in vegetative products being available for public or other use depending on local market demands.
- Manage forest resources to improve resilience to catastrophic events and maintain and enhance their ability for the long term sequestration of carbon.

Livestock Grazing

- Manage for a sustainable level of livestock grazing while meeting or progressing toward the Dakotas Standards for Rangeland Health (Appendix A) recognizing the ecological benefits of moderate levels of large animal grazing in the Great Plains.
- Manage livestock grazing to provide economic opportunities in the planning area.

Recreation

- Provide for a range of recreational opportunities, while minimizing adverse impacts to other resources.
- Encourage community partnerships with BLM for the purpose of improving recreational opportunities in response to the needs of visitors and local communities.

Travel Management and Transportation (including access)

- Manage transportation and access to provide for use and enjoyment of the BLM-administered public lands, while protecting resource values and providing for user safety.
- Access is available to larger blocks of BLM-administered surface lands.
- Manage transportation network to enhance a variety of uses for BLM-administered public lands.

Lands and Realty

Land Use Authorizations:

- Address needs of industry, utilities, the public, or government entities for land use authorizations, while minimizing adverse impacts to other resource values.
- Locate new ROW facilities adjacent to existing ROWs to the extent practical.

Withdrawals:

- Utilize withdrawal actions with the least restrictive measures and minimum size necessary to accomplish the required purpose.
- Protect significant resources or significant government investments.

Land Tenure:

- Retain BLM-administered public lands with high resource values in public ownership.
- Adjust land ownership to improve BLM-administered public land pattern and management efficiency.
- Acquire lands that enhance public access, have high resource values, and meet public and community needs.
- Achieve a more management efficient and consolidated public land pattern.

Mineral Uses

- Manage minerals to provide an opportunity for local economic benefits, while protecting the integrity of other resources.
- Minerals are developed while wildlife, cultural resources, air and water quality, and other resource values are maintained.
- As mineral development is completed, restore surface areas similar to pre-existing conditions.

Renewable Energy

- Make lands available for renewable energy development, consistent with goals and objectives of other resources.
- Provide opportunities for the development of renewable energy resources from sources such as wind, biomass, and solar, while minimizing adverse impacts to other resource values.
- Restore areas to near natural conditions when renewable energy development is decommissioned.

Special Designations

- Protect relevant and important values through BLM's ACEC designation, and apply special management where standard or routine management is not adequate to protect the areas from risks or threats of damage/degradation or to provide for public safety from natural hazards.

- Historic and Cultural sites are preserved. Sites are interpreted as vulnerability to degradation and budget determine.
- Back Country Byway – Highlight and interpret scenic, historic, archeological, or other interest values associated with back country byways in partnership with communities, interest groups, and state and federal entities.
- National Trails – Assist in cooperative efforts to manage current and future National Trails to protect the values for which they were designated.
- Designated trails or portions of trails on BLM land are in good repair and meet the intent of the trail designation.
- Wild and Scenic River Designations – Evaluate river segments for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System.
- Lands with Wilderness Characteristics- Identify and evaluate BLM-managed lands for wilderness characteristics.
- Protect relevant and important values through Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) designation and apply special management where standard or routine management is not adequate to protect the areas from risks or threats of damage/degradation or to provide for public safety from natural hazards.
- Paleontological resources at the Fossil Cycad ACEC are preserved. Sites are interpreted for vulnerability to degradation.

Public Health and Safety

Abandoned Mine Lands:

- Reclaim Abandoned Mine Land (AML) sites on BLM-administered public land to improve water quality, plant communities, and diverse fish and wildlife habitat.
- Reduce and/or eliminate risks to human health from hazardous mine openings and other physical and chemical safety hazards.
- Protect historic resources and wildlife habitat commonly associated with AML sites.
- Remove the greatest risks, preserve bat habitat, restore the environment, and preserve representative or significant cultural resources.

Hazardous Materials:

- Mitigate threats and reduce risks to the public and environment from hazardous materials.
- Healthy public lands.

